Statement of
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Before the
Subcommittee on Aviation of the
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
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Good Morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Aviation Subcommittee.

My name is Philip Brown and I am Acting Director of Aviation for the City of Kansas

City, Missouri. Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today to discuss the

Airport Screener Pilot Program (PP5).

Prescreening of airline passengers and baggage has been a component of the

commercial aviation landscape for over thirty years. The FAA implemented universal

prescreening on January 5, 1973, placing prescreening responsibility on the airlines.

Since this became a component of airline costs, this approach resulted in a security

screening workforce based generally on the lowest cost bidder, with employees paid at

minimum wage, lacking experience and skills, and with relatively poor training. In

addition to the United States, only two other countries in the world--Canada and

Bermuda--relied on air carriers to foot the responsibility for aviation security

screening.

In the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001,

Congress promptly began to address enhancements to aviation security. On September

21, 2001, a bill was introduced in the Senate that would place security screening

responsibility in the hands of the federal government, manned by a federal security workforce. A competing House bill proposed to utilize private screening companies under the direct supervision and control of the federal government. The Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA) was passed by Congress on November 16, 2001, and signed by the President on November 19, 2001.

ATSA created a new federal agency, the Transportation Security Administration within the Department of Transportation, with responsibility for security of all transportation modes. TSA took over the airlines' security screening contracts during a transition period leading to the formation of a trained federal security workforce.

As a compromise between the Senate and the House approaches to private versus federal security screeners, the ATSA provided for two private screening options:

First, under 49 U.S.C. § 44919, Congress created a mandatory "pilot program" and directed TSA to establish a "pilot program" for private screening involving not more than five airports (one from each of the five security risk categories defined by TSA). TSA, not the airport or the airlines, is required to contract with a private screening company at the selected airports.

Second, under 49 U.S.C. § 44920, Congress authorized a "security screening opt-out program" beginning November 19, 2004, under which airports can "opt-out" of the federal screening program and have security screening performed by a qualified private screening company under a contract with the TSA.

Kansas City applied for participation in the pilot program in May 2002 and was selected on June 10, 2002, as one of the five airports selected to participate in the pilot program, along with San Francisco, Rochester, Tupalo, and Jackson Hole. These airports represented a balanced cross-section of the different airport security risk categories. Kansas City International Airport is one the country's major medium hub airports. We receive service from twenty-four passenger and cargo airlines with over 230 daily departing flights, and we serve approximately 5,100,000 enplaned passengers a year, checking almost 8 million bags.

It is vitally important for Congress and TSA to recognize that a **"one size fits all"** approach to airport security cannot and will not work. There are vast differences in the physical layouts among the nation's airports. One of the reasons we believe Kansas City International Airport was selected was because of the Airport's unique physical layout and the unique requirements for security facilities and personnel.

Kansas City International Airport has three separate semi-circular passenger terminals. A depiction of Kansas City International Airport's configuration is set out in Attachment A of my Statement. The Airport was designed in the 1960's with the passenger convenience objective of shortening the distance between the terminal entrance and the points at which passengers board aircraft. Consequently, Kansas City International Airport is unique among major airports as it is configured so that the distance between curbside and boarding bridge is only 75 feet. This unique design minimizes the distance between curbside and gate, and it shortens the time between

arrival and boarding. This maximizes customer convenience. The lack of a single, central concourse also creates the need for multiple security screening locations and does not allow for central security screening that is common with other airport designs.

Due to its configuration, Kansas City International Airport has 15 security screening checkpoints with 26 screening lanes. At the time PP5 was initiated, Kansas City International Airport had 22 screening checkpoints. Consolidations as a result of the terminal renovation have reduced that number by over 30%. Because of its configuration, from a passenger's standpoint, Kansas City International Airport is equivalent to and functions as a series of smaller airports co-located on one property.

During the design stage of our current $257 million terminal improvement program, we considered options to centrally locate checkpoints within each terminal. Those options proved to be practicably and financially infeasible. It would have severely disrupted traffic flows, making the terminal structure unworkable. Wholly apart from the passenger and airline inconvenience, the costs of entirely rebuilding the airport terminals would have been prohibitive. Neither the City nor the airlines would have been able to afford the monumental costs.

The airlines and our passengers are well-served by the current configuration, which enhances customer convenience and airline efficiency and provides for future growth in flights and traffic.

We believe that the private screening program at Kansas City International Airport has been successful and we want to continue using it. The advantages of private screening can be summarized as follows:

- enhanced flexibility and efficiencies in personnel use and deployment.

- greater flexibility to respond to increased or decreased service requirements.

- greater flexibility to cross train and cross utilize personnel.

- not subject to federal employee "hiring freezes" and employment caps.

- more effective in dealing with non-performing personnel.

Because we do not have access to the Bearing Point analysis prepared for TSA, it is difficult for us to provide quantitative results of the PP5 program. However, qualitatively we believe the program has functioned extremely well. The Aviation Department polled all of the airline station managers and they unanimously endorsed the PP5 program and expressed their desire that it continue at Kansas City International Airport.

Kansas City has had relatively few complaints about screening services at Kansas City International Airport under the PP5. The quality of screener performance is high and they have demonstrated a commitment to providing a high level of customer service while not sacrificing their over-arching security responsibilities.

We provided input to the TSA Federal Security Director on Kansas City's critical goals and objectives for the private screening program, focusing on the external

customer service issues, short lines, courteous behavior, professionalism, efficiency coupled with thorough, quality screening of our customers. Based upon the experience to date, the quality of performance of the private screeners has been very good. Staffing has also been satisfactory. Average overall wait times are less than 4 minutes, except in the very early morning hours when waits can exceed 15-20 minutes because neither the airline ticket counters nor the security screening checkpoints open until 90 minutes before the first scheduled departures in the mornings.

The start-up of the PP5 program was particularly successful in that the screening contract was awarded to ITS (now FirstLine Transportation Security) on October 10, 2002. On November 19, 2002, Kansas City International Airport met the mandated checkpoint security deadline. In 40 days, the private screening company staffed up and trained its personnel to meet the deadline. Kansas City International Airport also met the 100% baggage screening deadline of December 31, 2002.

The first 18 months have not been without their challenges. During the course of the first year of private screening, available screener strength for FirstLine fell below that necessary to adequately serve the required number of screening checkpoints. TSA in Washington had failed to take into account the turnover that could be expected in a start up program and was not prepared to replace personnel losses. It is our understanding that this phenomenon occurred at federally-staffed airports also. Until TSA was able to regenerate the hiring protocol, the Federal Security Director at Kansas City International Airport brought in a "mobile screening force" of federal employees

to compensate for the shortfall. The federal screeners were segregated in a separate terminal to avoid mixing private with federal screeners.

Kansas City is particularly conducive to a private screening workforce because of the need for flexibility to re-deploy screeners on short notice, to reschedule screener shifts to and from off-hours, and to add or delete screening checkpoints on short notice as airline services increase or decrease.

Airline traffic is slowly returning to pre-9/11 levels. Kansas City International Airport has strong growth opportunities in the near term and is actively courting several airlines as new entrants into the Kansas City market and working with our existing airlines to increase service. Sometimes those opportunities can come along with as little as 90 days notice. The ability to quickly and efficiently respond to these additional requirements is critical to the airport's role of supporting and enhancing the economic growth and development for our metropolitan area. The, as yet, undetermined requirements for cargo security screening will make further demands on screener staffing and flexibility. Therefore, we are convinced that we should maintain our current program of private screening company operations with strong TSA management and control in order to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead. It is critical that the screening workforce be able to ramp up to meet demand on short notice. On the flip side, closing a checkpoint can result in unnecessary workforce and it is equally critical that the screening operator be able to downsize on short notice to avoid wasting money.

Kansas City International Airport has had experience with the rigidity of the federal workforce allocation problems. Several years ago, Kansas City was precipitously notified by the U.S. Customs Service that it would no longer clear Kansas City International Airport's international flights on an overtime basis. At that time 100% of our international flights occurred on weekends or at night, which was during overtime periods for Customs employees. That action effectively shut down our entire international program. Fortunately, with Congressional help, the agency reversed its position. Using private screening companies with adequate performance criteria in their contracts allows us to avoid these sorts of problems.

Kansas City plans on continuing with private screening through the "opt-out" program. Under the statute, the pilot program will expire after three years. However, the law allows participants in the pilot program to "elect to continue to have such screening carried out by the screening personnel of a private screening company" under the "opt-out" provision.

In short, Kansas City already opted out by participation in the PP5 program and wants to stay opted-out.

We think the law is clear that Kansas City does not have to re-apply and get new approval to participate in the opt-out program, but rather simply needs to advise TSA that is desires to continue its current opt-out status. We understand TSA is in the process of developing a plan for dealing with the "opt-out" program. We urge TSA to

confirm that Kansas City and other pilot program participants will have the automatic right to continue to participate in the opt-out program if they elect to do so.

There is a related issue that Congress should address, which is the issue of TSA funding of in-line baggage screening systems. This has a direct and immediate impact on the cost of passenger screening. Grant of an LOI to Kansas City would enable a reduction in the number of screening personnel and a commensurate reduction in screening costs to TSA.

TSA was authorized to issue letters of intent by Congress for inline EDS systems in the Aviation and Transportation Security Act of 2001. Kansas City was among the first to seek an LOI and we were advised by TSA that Kansas City had an excellent plan and that it ranked among the top twenty airports to obtain an LOI.

Kansas City International Airport was one of the first airports in the country to implement 100% checked bag screening through electronic means on a temporary basis despite the formidable difficulties of its unique airport layout and despite the fact that the airport was in the middle of major terminal reconstruction projects. The temporary system is not acceptable in the long term, however. Too much of our terminal lobby space is taken over by screening equipment, in particular 65 Explosive Trace Detection (ETD) machines positioned either immediately in front of or immediately behind ticket counters. Our proposed permanent EDS plan is highly cost efficient, totaling about $40 million. Half has already been covered by an FAA AIP grant, and it is vitally important for TSA to cover the remaining $20 million with an LOI.

A $20 million investment by TSA at Kansas City would be a sound investment and highly cost effective. Indeed, our planned in-line system would save TSA money by actually reducing the number of personnel required to conduct baggage screening. We estimate that TSA would save about $4.5 million annually in screening costs, by allowing TSA to reduce screening personnel. As a result, the project will pay for itself in less than 5 years.

TSA has said that it will not issue any more LOIs beyond the first eight airports. This is unacceptable and Congress needs to take action that will provide TSA with the resources to provide LOI funding for Kansas City International Airport and other worthy airports. Without an LOI commitment, Kansas City's ability to fund these and other critical safety and capacity projects might be in jeopardy.

In conclusion, the pilot private screening program has worked well at Kansas City International Airport, and has demonstrated that under appropriate circumstances private screeners under the direct control and supervision of the TSA will perform excellent security and customer service.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared remarks and I would be pleased to address any questions you and the Members of the Subcommittee may have. Thank you for this opportunity to present Kansas City's views on these important topics.

Kansas City International Airport
Terminal Area

To I-29 / I-435
To Rental Cars (Bern St)
To Economy Parking (Bern St)

Airport Entrance Road

Exit

Parking

Parking

Parking

Parking

Parking

Parking

Airport Police

A Parking Garage

B Parking Garage

C Parking Garage

Construction Area

Gates near A: 10 9 8 7 6 1-5 11 12 14 15 16 17 18 19 21 22 23 24 25 28 29 30

Gates near B: 60 59 58 57 56 40 41 42 43 45 50 51 52

Gates near C: 90 89 88 87 85 84 83 82 81 79 78 77 76 72 73 61 62 63 64 67 68 69

TERMINAL A	GATES 1-30
Air Midwest	1,2,3,4,5
US Airways	6,7,8
AirTran Airways	9
United / Lufthansa / Air Canada	10,11,12,14
Frontier	21
Midwest	23,24,25,28,29

TERMINAL B	GATES 40-60
Southwest	40,41,42,43,45 50,51,52
Delta / Delta Express / Delta Connection	56,57,58,59,60

TERMINAL C	GATES 61-90
Northwest / KLM	61,62,63,64
Continental / Continental Connection	67,68,69
America West	72,73
American	76,77,78,79
International Arrivals	90

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